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11. (currently amended) A method for analyzing defects on a semiconductor substrate, the method including the steps of:
optically inspecting the substrate to detect the defects,
identifying the defects by location,
analyzing the defects to detect extended objects, by
enclosing groups of the defects within bounding boxes with different sizes
to determine whether a given group of defects defines a given
extended object, even though the size of the bonding box
surrounding the given group of defects is different than the size of
other bounding boxes surrounding other groups of defects that
have also been defined as the given extended object,
enclosing groups of the defects within bounding boxes with different
orientations to determine whether a given group of defects defines
a given extended object, even though the orientation of the
bonding box surrounding the given group of defects is different
than the orientation of other bounding boxes surrounding other
groups of defects that have also been defined as the given extended
object, and
enclosing groups of the defects within bounding boxes with a different
degree of overlap to determine whether a given group of defects
defines a given extended object, even though the degree of overlap
of the bonding box surrounding the given group of defects is
different than the degree of overlap of other bounding boxes
surrounding other groups of defects that have also been defined as
the given extended object, and
analyzing a set of the given extended objects for an identifiable pattern of
repetition across the substrate.
12. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the extended objects include at least one of clusters and signatures.

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- 13. (canceled)
- 14. (canceled)
- 15. (canceled)
- 16. (canceled)

- 17. (currently amended) An apparatus for analyzing defects on a substrate, the apparatus comprising:

a sensor for inspecting the substrate and providing defect information,

a stage for providing relative movement between the sensor and the substrate and providing position information,

an input for receiving at least one of a bounding box size, a bounding box orientation, and a bounding box overlap as adjustable parameters, and

a controller for;

correlating defect information from the sensor and position information from the stage to define defects,

analyzing the correlated defect information and position information to detect extended objects, by

enclosing groups of the defects within bounding boxes with different sizes to determine whether a given group of defects defines a given extended object, even though the size of the bonding box surrounding the given group of defects is different than the size of other bounding boxes surrounding other groups of defects that have also been defined as the given extended object,

enclosing groups of the defects within bounding boxes with different orientations to determine whether a given group of defects defines a given extended object, even though the orientation of the bonding box surrounding the given group of defects is different than the orientation of other bounding boxes surrounding other groups of defects that have also been defined as the given extended object, and

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enclosing groups of the defects within bounding boxes with a
different degree of overlap to determine whether a given
group of defects defines a given extended object, even
though the degree of overlap of the bounding box
surrounding the given group of defects is different than the
degree of overlap of other bounding boxes surrounding
other groups of defects that have also been defined as the
given extended object, and

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analyzing a set of the given extended objects for an identifiable pattern of
repetition across the substrate.

18. (canceled)
19. (original) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the substrate is at least one of a semiconductor substrate, a reticle, and a mask.
20. (original) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the sensor is an optical sensor.